

AIDS in Lancaster County, Part I

AIDS Incidence in the Community

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the late clinical stage of infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). AIDS is characterized by a group of HIV-related opportunistic infections and damage to the immune and other organ systems. The U.S. has recorded the largest number of AIDS cases worldwide, although the disease has been reported in virtually all countries, among all races, ages, and classes.

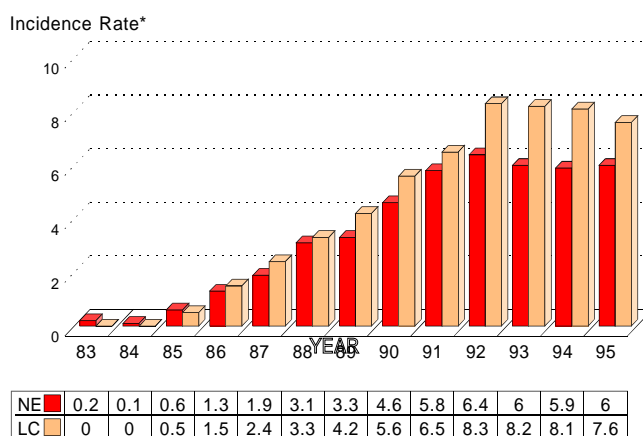
The first case of AIDS was reported in Nebraska in 1983, and Lancaster County reported its first case two years later. A total of 718 cases were diagnosed in Nebraska from 1983 to 1995, 17.0% in Lancaster County (122 cases). AIDS incidence has been higher in Lancaster County than statewide since 1986 (**Figure A**). In Lancaster County and Nebraska, AIDS incidence increased each year between 1985 and 1992, decreasing slightly in recent years (1993-1995). Nebraska's 1995 rate of 6.0 was the 8th lowest among the U.S. state rates, which ranged from 0.8 in North Dakota to 181.5 in Washington, DC.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County *Healthy People 2000* goal for AIDS incidence is 3.5 cases per 100,000 population. Actual incidence has been higher than this goal since 1989 (**Figure A**).

Among AIDS cases diagnosed in Lancaster County residents from 1985 to 1995, 97.5% were among adults. The majority of cases occurred among those 30 to 44 years old (**Figure B**), as was also true for the state and nation. Children ages 0 to 14 constituted 2.5% of the cases; nearly all of these involved perinatal transmission from mother to child. No Lancaster County teenagers (15 to 19 years old) have been diagnosed with AIDS. Those infected with HIV during their teens are usually diagnosed with AIDS as adults.

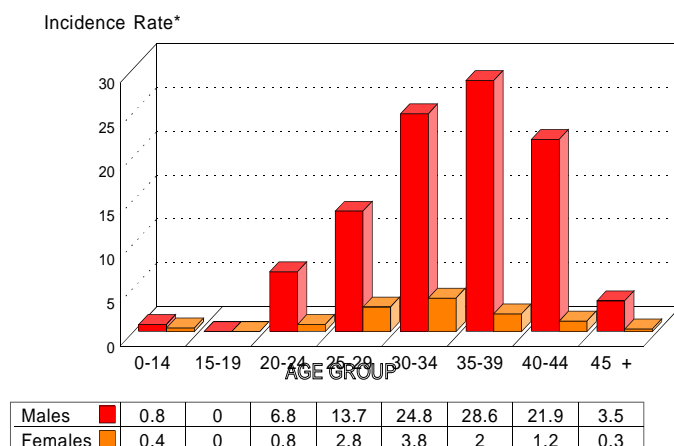
AIDS affects more males than females locally, statewide, and nationally. In Lancaster County, males

Figure A: AIDS, 1983 - 1995
Nebraska and Lancaster County



*New AIDS cases per 100,000 population

Figure B: AIDS Incidence by Age and Sex
Lancaster County, 1985-1995



*New AIDS cases per 100,000 population

comprised 89.3% of AIDS cases, and females comprised the remaining 10.7% of all AIDS cases diagnosed from 1983 to 1995. In all age groups, males were more likely than females to be infected with AIDS (**Figure B**). The 1995 incidence rate for AIDS among males was 14.6 per 100,000, compared to 0.9 per 100,000 females. National incidence rates in 1995 were 57.4 per 100,000 males and 12.4 per 100,000 females.

The AIDS virus disproportionately affects the racial/ethnic minority community in Lancaster County. From 1985 to 1995, the Black community was affected at the highest rate (21.8 cases per 100,000), followed by the Hispanic and White populations (**Figure C**). Nationally, incidence is also highest among the Black population, followed by Hispanic and White populations.

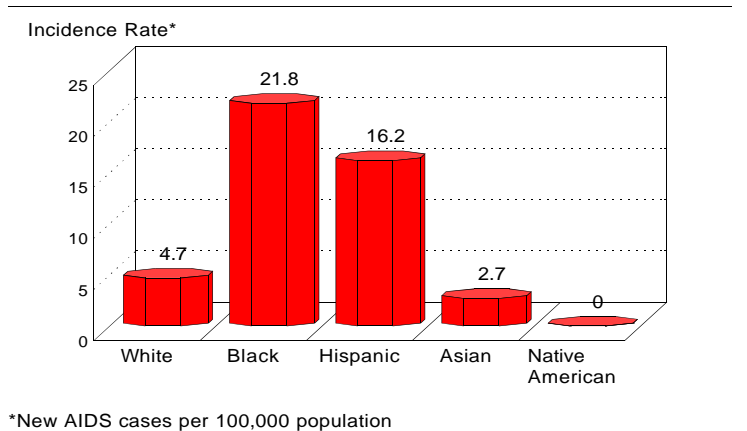
Since 1985, Hispanic and Black males have had the highest AIDS incidence of any gender or ethnicity (**Figure D**). Black females had the highest rate among females, followed by Asian females, who had a higher incidence rate than did Asian males. At the national level, incidence for both males and females is highest among Black individuals, followed by Hispanic individuals.

Based on this data, we can summarize key AIDS trends in Lancaster County as follows:

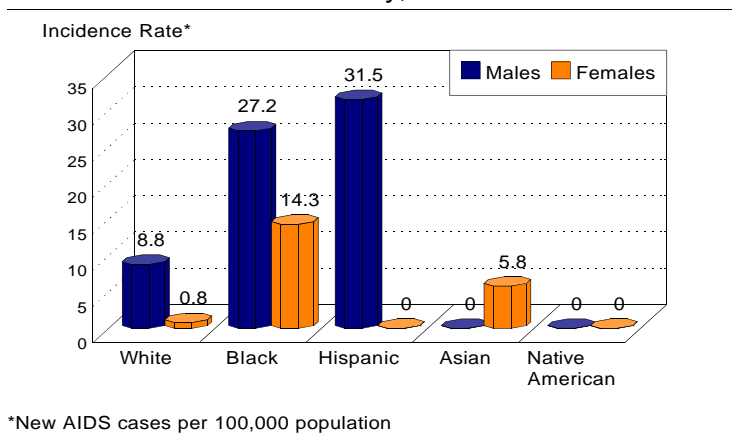
- 1) AIDS cases have steadily increased from 1985 to 1992, decreasing slightly from 1992 to 1995.
- 2) New cases of AIDS occur primarily among young to middle-aged adults, particularly 35- to 39-year-olds.
- 3) Lancaster County males are much more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS than females.
- 4) Infection with AIDS is more likely to affect Black and Hispanic individuals than other populations. Black and Hispanic males have the highest AIDS incidence.

The next issue of Epi-Info will explore sources of HIV exposure among Lancaster County AIDS cases.

**Figure C: AIDS Incidence by Race/Ethnicity
Lancaster County, 1985-1995**



**Figure D: AIDS Incidence by Race and Sex
Lancaster County, 1985 - 1995**



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